

Negative Exponents

When a number or variable is raised to a negative exponent, it means to write the reciprocal of that number or variable **ONLY** and write the exponent as a positive number.

Another way to think of it:

--If the number or variable with the negative exponent is in the numerator then put it in the denominator and write the exponent as a positive number.

--If the number or variable with the negative exponent is in the denominator then put it in the numerator and write the exponent as a positive number.

Always write final answers with POSITIVE exponents!!!

Examples :

$$1) a^{-2} = \frac{1}{a^2}$$

$$2) 4x^{-5} = \frac{4}{x^5}$$

Only the variable x had a negative exponent so only that was written in the denominator

3)